

# Chapter 1: Characteristics and classification of living organisms

IGCSE Biology



# 1.1 Characteristics of living organisms

## Objectives:

**Describe** the characteristics of living organisms by defining the terms: *movement, respiration, sensitivity, growth, reproduction, excretion, and nutrition*

# Characteristics of living things

- In groups of approximately 5, create a list of characteristics of living organisms
  - Hint: what are things that all living organisms do?

# Characteristics of living things

- In your group of approximately 5, come up with a definition for each of the 7 characteristics of living organisms
  - *Movement, Respiration, Sensitivity, Growth, Reproduction, Excretion, Nutrition*

# **Movement**

an action by an organism causing a change of position or place

- **Plants move when they grow**
  - Roots move down into soil, leaves and stems move up toward light
- **Animals move to obtain food/avoid being caught**

# Respiration

the chemical reactions in cells that break down nutrient molecules and release energy

- Involves chemical reactions happening in cells to breakdown glucose
  - Oxygen is usually needed
- Glucose + oxygen → carbon dioxide + water
- Use energy for movement, growth, repair and reproduction

# Sensitivity

the ability to detect and respond to changes in the environment

- Plants respond to the sun by moving leaves to face the light
  - Some flowers open/close at day/night
- Animals have sense receptors (cells) for detecting light, sound, touch, pressure, and chemicals in the air and in food

# Growth

permanent increase in size

- Involves making more complex molecules such as proteins
- Plants grow throughout their lives
- Animals stop growing when they reach a certain size



# Reproduction

the processes that make more of the same kind of organism

- Asexual reproduction involves one parent giving rise of offspring that are often identical to each other and to the parent
- Sexual reproduction involves two parent organisms producing **gametes** (sex cells) which fuse to give rise to the next generation
  - Offspring show **variation** - they are not identical to each other or to their parents

# Excretion

removal from organisms of toxic materials and substances in excess of requirements

- **Metabolism** is all the chemical reactions that occur in an organism
- Plants store waste substances in their leaves so they are removed when leaves fall off
- Animals breathe out carbon dioxide; other wastes leave the body in the urine

# Nutrition

taking in of materials for energy, growth and development

- **Green plants - photosynthesis**
  - energy from sunlight is absorbed and used to turn  $\text{CO}_2$  and water into simple sugars
- **Animals**
  - eat plants/animals to gain energy and nutrients
  - process of taking in food is called **ingestion**

# Acronym to remember

**M**ovement

**R**espiration

**S**ensitivity

**G**rowth

**R**eproduction

**E**xcretion

**N**utrition

# 1.2 Classification

## Objectives:

- State that organisms can be classified into groups by the features that they share

# Classification

- Living organisms can be classified into 5 *major* groups called **kingdoms**:
  - Animals
  - Plants
  - Fungi
  - Protists
  - Prokaryotes (bacteria)
- Organisms in each kingdom show similar features

# Classification

- Smallest grouping of organisms: **species**
- Kingdoms are subdivided into **phyla**  
(singular: **phylum**)
- Kingdom, **Phylum**, **Class**, **Order**, **Family**,  
**Genus**, **Species**

# 1.2 Binomial System

## Objectives:

- State that organisms can be classified into groups by the features that they share
- Define species
- Define and describe the binomial system of naming species



# Binomial System

- Binomial system means 'two names'
- A species is a group of individuals that look alike
  - live in the same habitat and breed together producing fertile offspring which can breed with one another
- Each species is given two name

# Binomial System

- First name is for the **genus**
  - group of species that are closely related but do not breed with one another
- Second name is the **trivial** name that is **applied to one species within the genus**
  - never use the trivial/species name on its own

# Writing the Binomial Name

- *Genus species* or Genus species
  - The Genus is always capitalized
  - The species is always lowercase
  - the full name must always be *italicized* (computer) or underlined (hand written), never both!

**Examples - try to guess the common name of the following animals and plants**

1. *Canis latrans*
2. *Lynx rufus*
3. *Hadrurus arizonensis*
4. *Cercidium floridum*
5. *Carnegiea gigantea*

Examples - try to guess the common names of the following animals and plants

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Canis latrans</i>        | 1. Coyote                  |
| 2. <i>Lynx rufus</i>           | 2. Bobcat                  |
| 3. <i>Hadrurus arizonensis</i> | 3. Arizona Desert Scorpion |
| 4. <i>Cercidium floridum</i>   | 4. Palo verde tree         |
| 5. <i>Carnegiea gigantea</i>   | 5. Saguaro cactus          |

# 1.2 Invertebrates

## Objective:

- List main features used to place invertebrate into the following phyla: nematodes, annelids, and molluscs



# Invertebrates

- Animals without a vertebral column or backbone
- 3 phyla of invertebrate (there are more than 3, but we're only talking about these three):
  - Nematodes
  - Annelids
  - Molluscs



## **Classifying Invertebrate Activity**

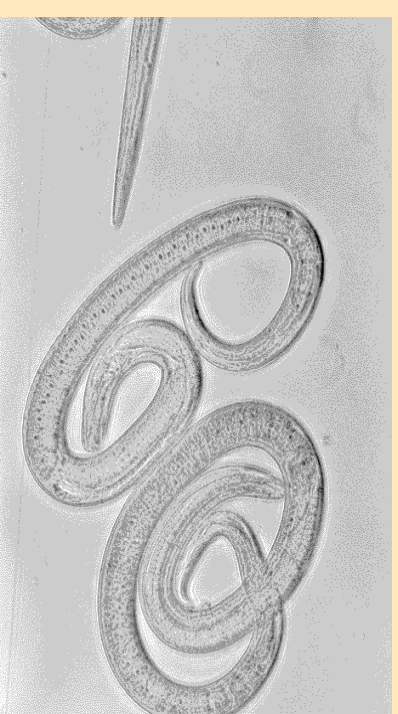
In your table groups of 3, look through each of the pictures of invertebrates provided to you.

On a separate sheet of paper, write the name of each organism and list characteristics that they show (describe each organism). Group the pictures together of which are similar based on your list of characteristics and determine if each group is a nematode, annelid, or mollusc.

# Nematodes/Roundworms

## Characteristics

- Thread-like body
  - Tapers at the mouth and anus
- No obvious head
- No legs
- Non-segmented (smooth) body



Above: *Trichinella spiralis*  
Below: *Mermis nigrescens*



# Annelids

## Characteristics

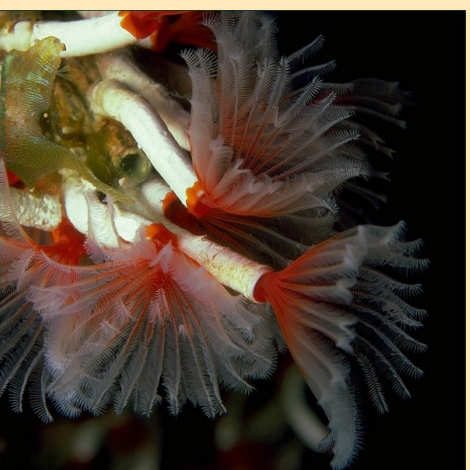
- Soft bodies
  - made up of segments
- Some have paddle like extensions for moving
- Chaetae or bristles for making contact with mud/soil
- Most species live in the sea
  - Some live in soil and freshwater (streams, lakes, rivers)



Above: *Allolobophora chlorotica*

Below left: *Filigranella elatensis*

Below right: *Hermodice carunculata*



# Molluscs

## Characteristics

- Soft bodies
  - non-segmented
- Muscular 'foot' (for burrowing/movement)
- Most species have 1-2 shells for protection
  - Some don't have a shell



Above left: *Arion vulgaris*  
Above right: *Theba pisana*  
Below: Clams



# Molluscs

## Characteristics

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Above: *Wunderpus photogenicus*  
Below: *Histioteuthis heteropsis*

